

HOW TO... Optimise your PC

If you think your PC could perform better, try PC Booster. Steve Haines explains all

ON THE COVER DISC No matter how carefully you look after your PC, a few system tweaks will invariably boost its performance.

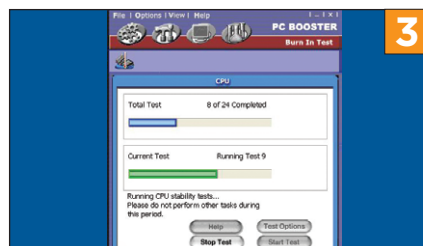
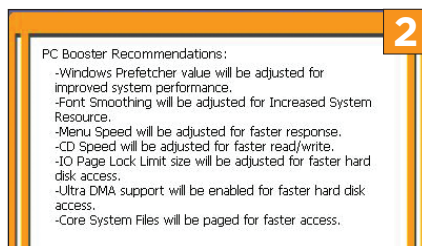
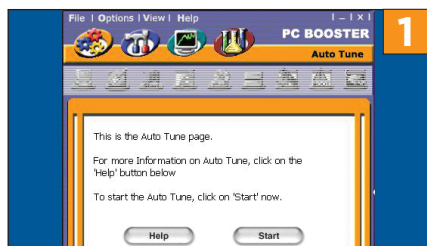
However, unless you're an expert, it can be hard to know which bits of your system to adjust. PC Booster, on this month's cover disc, enables you to fine-tune your computer with just a couple of clicks. Here we show you how to use it.

1 When you first start PC Booster, you'll be given the option to run Auto Tune. This will back up your original settings before making any system changes. Simply click Start, then Begin Tuning and PC Booster will analyse and

benchmark your system. This may take a while; a bar shows the progress.

2 When PC Booster has finished analysing your system, it will display a list of recommendations to optimise the performance of your PC. If you are happy with these recommendations, simply click the Optimize Now button and PC Booster will automatically fine-tune your computer. Then reboot your PC for the changes to take effect. After rebooting, you can view the results of the optimisation in a series of benchmark graphs showing the 'before' and 'after' status of your system.

3 For advanced users, PC Booster includes a number of manual tweaks that you can apply to your system. It also provides the option to 'stress-test' individual components, such as the CPU, memory and hard disk. To do this, click on the Burn In Tests icon at the top of the PC Booster main window – this looks like a picture of green, yellow and blue bottles – and click the To Test button at the bottom. The first option is to test your CPU. Click on Start Test, choose how many tests you would like PC Booster to perform – eight, 24 or 48 – and the application will perform a number of cycles to computing complex calculations on your PC.



HOW TO... Rescue lost data

Steve Haines shows how to use O&O BlueCon to prevent a disastrous loss of files

ON THE COVER DISC Imagine how devastated you'd be to lose the files on your PC, especially your digital photos or the tax spreadsheet you spent hours making. Backups, as we keep telling you, are vital. If you're like most people, though, you probably don't back up as often as you should. You can prepare for the worst with O&O BlueCon, which is on your cover disc.

O&O BlueCon can help you create a boot disk that will let you restart your PC when Windows won't start. It also provides an easy way of backing up your system configuration so that you can restore your settings after a crash.

To follow this tutorial you will need a CD writer and a CD-burning application.

1 Open O&O BootWizard XXL in the Start menu. Choose ISO-Image if you wish to create a bootable CD, or Floppy disk if you wish to boot from floppies (you will need at least six floppy disks to do this). If you have a CD writer, we recommend that you choose to create an ISO image, which you can then burn to a CD. To do this, however, you need to have your original Windows disc to hand. Click Next, and choose a location to save the ISO image.

2 Once you have selected the relevant folder on your Windows disc, O&O BlueCon will ask if you want to copy any other tools and give you the option to password-protect your disc.

Click Next twice to continue. The wizard displays a message showing you the stages of creating a boot disk. Click Next to create the ISO image.

3 When the wizard has finished creating the image, you can burn it to a CD using your CD-burning software. Make sure you choose the option in your software to burn an ISO image. You can then use this CD to boot into Windows. Try it out before you need it, though. If it doesn't boot, check that your BIOS is set to boot from the CD drive. You access the BIOS in most PCs by pushing a key at startup. The key varies between computers, but an onscreen message should tell you which to press, for example Del or F2. **CS**

